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ABSTRACT

White House Conferences on Children and Youth, an idea originated by James E. West, have been held at approximately 10-year intervals during this century: 1909, 1919, 1930, 1940, 1950, and 1960. Although called by the President, and with one or more sessions usually having been held in the White House (from which the name of the conferences derive), the purpose of these conferences has been to advise the American people. Each of the conferences has been concerned with a problem typical of the decade in which it occurred. The White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, in 1909, was a protest against the use of institutional care for dependent and neglected children. The second conference, held in 1919, the White House Conference on Standards of Child Welfare, framed the first important body of child health and welfare standards to insure that every child had a fair chance. The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection (1930) produced the most comprehensive statement of the needs of children ever written. The subject of the 1940 Conference on Children in a Democracy canvassed the fundamental democratic principles, conditions, and services essential for the well-being of children in a democracy. The Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (1950) was concerned with democracy's responsibility "to produce socially minded cooperative people, without sacrificing individuality." This conference explored the ingredients of a healthy personality development. The 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth enlarged this theme to find ways "to promote opportunities for children and youth to realize their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity." The stories of these conferences are provided. (DB)

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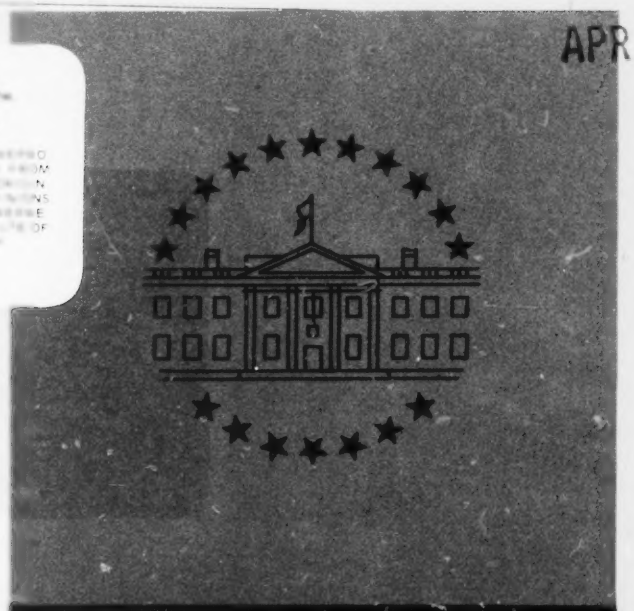

THE STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1909 · 1919 · 1930 · 1940 · 1950 · 1960

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THE STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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chance." To insure this fair chance, the 1919 Conference framed the first important body of child health and welfare standards.

The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection (1930) occurred during an era marked by a wealth of research materials in the field of health and child development, and its ambitious charge included "all children in their total aspects, including those social and environmental factors which are influencing modern childhood." The Conference produced the most comprehensive statement of the needs of children ever written. Unfortunately, the Great Depression soon overwhelmed all the portents to a better day for children.

The subject of the next decennial Conference—the 1940 Conference on Children in a Democracy—was the logical one in a world so threatening to democracy itself. This Conference canvassed the fundamental democratic principles, conditions, and services essential for the well-being of children in a democracy.

The Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (1950), which came at the end of a decade of much popular and research interest in dynamic psychology, was concerned with democracy's responsibility "to produce socially-minded cooperative people, without sacrificing individuality." The Conference explored the ingredients of a healthy personality, the forces that work for and against its development, the kinds of help children and youth have a right to expect from their families, schools, churches, and government if they are to have a chance to grow in physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

Since the Midcentury Conference had centered its attention on healthy personality development, it was a natural outcome for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth to enlarge this theme to find ways "to promote opportunities for children and youth to realize their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity." The great number of delegates and guests, in addition to the broad representation by youth, marked the deep concern felt over the Nation for assuring that every child would have a chance to know the full meaning of a creative life. The many recommendations that emerged out of the Conference work groups made it clear that major steps in many directions would have to be taken before the goal of the 1960 Conference could become a reality for all of the Nation's children and youth.

This pamphlet, then, tells the story of these White House Conferences on Children and Youth—their origin, what their goals have been, what they have contributed to the well-being of children and their families, how they have helped to build the strength of the Nation.

Origin of the White House Conferences on Children

The idea for the first White House Conference on Children originated with James E. West, a young lawyer who had been raised in a Washington, D.C., orphanage. James West was born in Washington in 1876. At the age of 6, having lost both parents, he was placed in an orphanage. As a young man, he became a member of the orphanage staff, directing the program for boys. It was in this background that his life-long interest in dependent children had its roots.

Soon after graduation from law school, West was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to the Board of Pension Appeals for the District of Columbia and later became Assistant Attorney of the Department of the Interior. During these years, West was active on many fronts in behalf of children. He is credited with having secured the juvenile court for the District of Columbia. He promoted the Playground Association of Washington and organized and served as secretary of the National Child Rescue League.

Sometime early in 1908, West became as-

sociated with the child rescue campaign being conducted by Theodore Dreiser, editor of THE DELINEATOR. This campaign had been launched late in 1907 "for the child that needs a home and the home that needs a child."

Each month, THE DELINEATOR featured the photographs and case histories of children living in institutions. Anyone wanting a child was urged to get in touch with the social agency having custody. That this campaign would have great appeal to West is obvious.

West joined forces with Dreiser in an effort to advance the well-being of the dependent child. It was an alliance that could have been forecast on the basis of the interest of these two men in children.

In August 1908, West represented THE DELINEATOR at the twenty-fifth anniversary meeting of the National Home Finding Society in Chicago. This conference stressed the need for a greater national effort on behalf of dependent children.

Later that summer, West wrote to President Roosevelt in an effort to interest him in the care of dependent children. In October, he and Dreiser went to the White House to discuss with the President THE DELINEATOR's child rescue campaign and the needs of the dependent child. West suggested a national conference on dependent children to be sponsored by the President as a way to "greatly advance the cause of the dependent child."

President Roosevelt indicated his willingness to help in any way he could and asked that the idea for the Conference be presented to him in a more detailed form.

From this point on, West concentrated mainly on the Conference; Dreiser, on his campaign and the formation of the Child Rescue League.

White House Conference on Dependent Children (1909)

West began by interesting many of the national leaders in child welfare in joining him in proposing a national conference on the dependent child. Later, on December 22, 1908, a proposal for such a conference was outlined in a letter sent to the President. West was mainly responsible for drafting the letter although it was signed by eight other men in addition to himself:

HOMER FOLKS, Secretary
New York Charities Aid Association

HASTINGS HART, Superintendent
Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society

JOHN M. GLENN, Director
Russell Sage Foundation

THOMAS M. MULRY, President
St. Vincent de Paul Society

EDWARD T. DEVINE, Editor
CHARITIES AND COMMONS

JULIAN W. MACK, Judge
Circuit Court of Illinois

CHARLES W. BIRTWELL, Secretary
Boston Children's Aid Society

THEODORE DREISER, Editor
THE DELINEATOR

Excerpts from this letter to President Roosevelt reveal the arguments advanced for holding the conference.

> "The State has dealt generously with her troublesome children; but what is she doing for those who make no trouble but are simply unfortunate? . . . Some are orphans or half-orphans; some are abandoned by heartless parents; some are victims of cruelty or neglect. They are not delinquents; they are accused of no fault; they are simply destitute or neglected . . . .
>
> "It is of the highest importance to the welfare of this vast number of future citizens

that all child-caring work shall be conducted on a high plane . . . that in the placing of children in families the utmost care shall be taken to exclude all undesirable applicants; that every precaution should be taken in the subsequent supervision of the children to prevent neglect, overwork, insufficient education, or inadequate moral and religious training, and that institutions shall be so carried on as to secure the best physical, mental, moral, and religious training of each individual child and to fit him for active and creditable citizenship . . . .

"The problem of the dependent child is acute; it is large; it is national. We believe that it is worthy of national consideration. We earnestly hope, therefore that you will cooperate in an effort to get this problem before the American people. . . ."

The memorandum accompanying the letter suggested 10 propositions for consideration and action by the Conference.

The Conference is called

On December 25, 1908, President Roosevelt issued the call to the Conference to 200 persons concerned with some phase of child caring.

In calling the Conference to be held in Washington, January 25 and 26, the President said, "Surely nothing ought to interest our people more than the care of the children who are destitute and neglected but not delinquent. Personally, I very earnestly believe that the best way in which to care for dependent children is in the family . . . ."

On January 10, the President appointed James West, Homer Folks, and Thomas M. Mulry as a committee on arrangements.

The delegates to the Conference held their first meeting in the White House on January 25 when they were addressed by the President. The President said: "There can be no more important subject from the standpoint of the Nation than that with which you are to deal, because when you take care of the children you are taking care of the Nation of tomorrow; and it is incumbent upon every one of us to do all in his or her power to provide for the interests of those children whom cruel misfortune has handicapped at the very outset of their lives."

He expressed the earnest hope that "the members of this conference will take a progressive stand, so as to establish a goal toward which the whole country can work . . . . I believe that we, all of us, have come to the conclusion that where possible the thing to be done for the child is to provide a home for him; and that where that is not possible, we should make the conditions as nearly as possible like those which the child would have in a home."

At the end of the 2-day session, the conclusions of the Conference were sent to the President. Some of the words are still echoing down the years. Here is the gist of them.

"1. Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. It is the great molding force of mind and character. Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons. Except in unusual circumstances, the home should not be broken up for reasons of poverty . . . .

"2. The most important and valuable philanthropic work is not the curative, but the preventive; to check dependency by a thorough study of its causes and by effectively remedying or eradicating them should be the constant aim of society . . . .

"3. As to the children who for sufficient reasons must be removed from their own homes, or have no homes, it is desirable that, if normal in mind and body and not requiring special training, they should be cared for in families whenever practicable. The carefully selected foster home is for the normal child the best substitute for the natural home . . . .

"4. So far as it may be found necessary temporarily or permanently to care for certain classes of children in institutions, these institutions should be conducted on the cottage plan . . . .

"5. To engage in the work of caring for needy children is to assume a most serious responsibility, and should, therefore, be permitted only to those

who are definitely organized for the purpose, who are of suitable character, and possess, or have reasonable assurance of securing, the funds needed for their support . . . .

"6. The proper training of destitute children being essential to the well-being of the State, it is a sound public policy that the State through its duly authorized representative should inspect the work of all agencies which care for dependent children, whether by institutional or by homefinding methods and whether supported by public or private funds . . . ."

Other recommendations dealt with the importance of educational opportunities for the destitute child, the importance of facts and records to his care, the necessity for good physical care and health measures, the necessity for cooperation between child caring agencies, the undesirableness of State legislation that presented roadblocks to placing children in homes, and the need for a permanent voluntary organization devoted to the needs of the dependent child.

The last two recommendations submitted to the President consisted of an endorsement of pending legislation for a Federal Children's Bureau and a clarion call that the needs of the dependent child should be the criteria which govern his care:

"13. A bill is pending in Congress for the establishment of a Federal Children's Bureau to collect and disseminate information affecting the welfare of children. In our judgment the establishment of such a bureau is desirable and we earnestly recommend the enactment of the pending measure.

"14. The preceding suggestions may be almost completely summarized in this —that the particular condition and needs of each destitute child should be carefully studied and that he should receive that care and treatment which his individual needs require, and which should be as nearly as possible like the life of the other children in the community."

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On February 15, 1909, President Roosevelt sent a message to Congress in which he declared that, "The interests of the nation are involved in the welfare of this army of children no less than in our great material affairs." He urged the establishment of a Federal Children's Bureau and legislation for the District of Columbia in accordance with the recommendations of the Conference.

Outcomes of the Conference

The 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children had far-reaching effects on child care in the United States for many decades.

The proposed Children's Bureau became a fact in 1912, after a long and arduous campaign conducted by the National Child Labor Committee. The recommendation for a voluntary national child welfare agency was realized with the establishment of the Child Welfare League of America a few years later.

The strong declaration in favor of the care of children in their own homes led to a movement for mother's pensions which swept the country during the next decade. The recommendation of family care instead of institutional care, when practicable, for children necessarily removed from their own homes contributed greatly to the development of adoption agencies and still more to the boarding-out care for children unavailable for adoption. The "cottage plan" in place of the congregate institution was another development that followed in the wake of the Conference suggestion.

Other recommendations dealing with such subjects as incorporation of agencies, inspection of them by the State, education and medical care of foster children, social investigations and records, and the like, aided substantially in the development of higher standards on the part of the child caring agencies.

The Children's Bureau, once it was established, included high on its list of priorities the investigating and reporting on mother's aid and foster care. Beginning with institutional care, the Bureau moved on to adoption, illegitimacy, and foster family care.

All of these developments, however, were the result of osmosis rather than direct follow-up by State and local committees, as was to

be the case for later Conferences. As far as the record shows, the only direct followup of the Conference was a letter sent by President Theodore Roosevelt to the Governors of the various States: "I heartily endorse the declarations of the Conference and bespeak your cooperation in getting the same before the people of your State directly interested in the subject matter thereof." This direct calling on State Governors for action set a precedent for all later Conferences—although, in most instances, the President's call was issued as part of the preparation for the Conference rather than as an aftermath.

Nothing in the 1909 Conference proceedings suggested that a White House Conference on Children should be called at 10-year intervals. That the second one was called—and the pattern established—was due to Julia Lathrop, the first Chief of the Children's Bureau.

White House Conference on Child Welfare Standards (1919)

In 1918, a great war had ended. During the war, the Bureau had struggled to maintain certain basic standards as to the health and welfare of children. To Julia Lathrop, it seemed the logical time to establish these standards on a firmer base.

It was during the second year of World War I—in April 1918—that the U.S. Children's Bureau, with the approval of President Woodrow Wilson, proclaimed "Children's Year"—a campaign designed to arouse the Nation to the importance of conserving childhood in times of national peril. The second White House Conference on Children was the culmination of this campaign. Funds for the Conference came from an allotment from President Wilson's Emergency Fund.

President Wilson in making the allotment for the campaign declared that, "Next to the duty of doing everything possible for the soldiers at the front, there could be, it seems to me, no more patriotic duty than that of protecting the children who constitute one-third of our population." He also expressed the hope that the work sponsored in the Children's Year campaign might so successfully develop as "to set up certain irreducible minimum standards for the health, education, and work of the American child."

The Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense established a special child welfare department which organized 17,000 committees. As a result, over 1,000,000 women were united in the effort to protect children from the effects of the war.

The activities of Children's Year reached out over the country to a degree entirely new and greatly strengthened nationwide understanding of the importance of child welfare as a national issue. It was, therefore, natural to conclude the year by a summing up of national opinion on standards of child welfare.

In an effort to realize President Wilson's hope, a Conference on Child Welfare Standards was sponsored by the Children's Bureau in May, 1919.

Miss Lathrop described the purpose of the Conference as follows:

> "First, it was felt that the Children's Bureau as part of the Department of Labor—a department concerned fundamentally with the problems of human welfare as exemplified in the great mass of working people of America which it represents—had the responsibility of bringing together and coordinating opinion concerning the welfare of children in the United States. Second, the Conference seemed the most direct way of fulfilling the aim of Children's Year, as expressed by the President, 'to set up certain irreducible minimum standards for the health, education, and work of the American child.' Such standards, it was felt, should be considered not as a goal, but as a suggested point of departure."

A small number of foreign experts were invited to attend the 1919 Conference for the insights they could give to new protective measures for children growing up under war conditions. In addition to foreign guests, there were some 200 Americans at the Washington Conference—social workers, pediatricians, obstetricians, psychiatrists, public health nurses, educators, economists, judges, club women.

Two themes were closely interwoven throughout the Washington Conference—the necessity for more public effort in behalf of children, and the expenditure of that effort in the light of the individual characteristics of each child and his family. Whatever the phase of the child's well-being that was under discussion, the Conference frankly demanded or boldly presupposed public provision of instruction, service, money, equipment, or legislative protection.

At the time of the Washington Conference, President Wilson was deeply involved in his effort to get the Senate to ratify the treaty providing for the United States' participation in the League of Nations and he was unable to attend the Conference.

The small meeting of specialists in Washington was followed by a series of 8 regional conferences in New York, Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, San Francisco and Seattle. These, in turn, were followed by a number of smaller conferences in cities and States.

The regional conferences, extending from Boston to San Francisco, resulted in broad discussion and valuable criticism of the standards tentatively set up at the Washington meeting. The discussion at the regional conferences centered about four main topics: protection of the health of mothers and children, the economic and social basis for child welfare standards, child labor, and children in need of special care.

The discussions of child labor, as well as the economic factors of child welfare, repeatedly brought forth the statement that for the successful rearing and education of the child, the income of the father was of the utmost importance.

On the issue of children in need of special care, the experts attending the regional meetings arrived at much the same conclusions as did the conferees in Washington about the need for certain basic fundamentals—an adequate family income, as few broken homes as possible, every effort to reconstruct the home and to supervise the child in his own home before resorting to removal from it, adequate opportunity for "education, recreation, vocational preparation for life and for moral and spiritual development."

These minimum standards, although much more general in character, were very similar to those recommended at the 1909 White House Conference. During the next decade, these standards were reflected in much of the legislation passed by the States for the protection of children.

Minimum standards for the public protection of the health of mothers and children, children entering employment, and children in need of special care were adopted by the Conference. After consideration by the regional conferences, these standards were revised by a special committee of five.

Minimum standards as to children entering employment were considerably in advance of the legislation of the time. In the decades that followed, however, these standards had an important bearing on Federal and State child labor legislation.

But it was the standards on the protection of maternity and infancy that proved most influential. The discussions at the Conference and the minimum standards it supported for the protection of maternity and infancy represented the first steps in a nationwide movement that culminated in the enactment of the Sheppard-Towner Act passed by the Congress in 1921. Under this Maternity and Infancy Act, the Federal Government contributed to the development of facilities throughout the country for the better protection of mothers and their babies. Originally authorized for a 5-year period, it was subsequently extended for 2 additional years—until June 30, 1929, when it ceased to operate.

Upon the foundation of the work under the Sheppard-Towner Act was erected in 1935 the cooperative Federal-State program for maternal and child health under the Social Security Act.

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White House Conference on Child Health and Protection (1930)

The third White House Conference found the United States in the midst of an industrial depression whose depth was bleakness itself and whose end was shrouded in the mystery of the future. The times were troubled, ways of meeting the emergency were matters of controversy, and children's workers were overwhelmed by the suffering among children and their families.

In July 1929, President Herbert Hoover issued a call for a White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, "to study the present status of the health and well-being of the children in the United States and its possessions: to report what is being done; to recommend what ought to be done and how to do it." The President also set up a planning committee for the Conference made up of eminent physicians, social workers, educators, and laymen.

The Conference chairman was Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior; its director, H. E. Bernard. The Secretary of Labor was vice chairman, and the Chief of the Children's Bureau, Grace Abbott, was a member of the planning committee and secretary of the executive committee.

A grant of $500,000 made available by the President from certain funds left over from the European relief funds of World War I, gave the 1930 Conference adequate resources for its work.

The planning committee developed a committee membership of approximately 1,200 men and women. The Conference was divided into four sections—medical service, public health service and administration, education and training, and handicapped children. These, in turn, were divided into 17 divisions, many of which were further subdivided. A total of approximately 138 committee and subcommittee chairmen conducted the various research and study activities, in addition to the officers of each section and to carefully selected research assistants.

On the evening of November 19, the 1,200 and more delegates and 2,000 invited guests came together in the first Conference session.

The Conference opens

It was President Hoover's meeting. His address revealed the President in the light which had endeared him to the Nation during the war. Consciously, or unconsciously, it was an emotional appeal.

Only excerpts can be given here from the President's speech:

> "We approach all problems of childhood with affection. Theirs is the province of joy and humor. They are the most wholesome part of the race, the sweetest for they are fresher from the hands of God. Whimsical, ingenious, mischievous, we live a life of apprehension as to what their opinion may be of us; a life of defense against their terrifying energy; we put them to bed with a sense of relief and a lingering of devotion. We envy them the freshness of adventure and discovery of life; we mourn over the disappointments they will meet . . . .
>
> "The fundamental purpose of this conference is to set forth an understanding of those safeguards which will assure to them health in mind and body. These are safeguards and services to children which can be provided by the community, the State, or the Nation—all of which are beyond the reach of the individual parent . . . .
>
> "Indeed, human progress marches only when children excel their parents. In democracy our progress is the sum of progress of the individuals—that they each individually achieve to the full capacity of their abilities and character. Their varied personalities must be brought fully to bloom; they must not be mentally regimented to a single mold or the qualities of many will be stifled; the door of opportunity must be opened to each of them."

The 1930 Conference was able for the first time to utilize the radio in bringing millions of mothers and fathers within range of the opening session. President Hoover in this address referred to "these unseen millions listening in their homes, who likewise are truly members of the conference."

The gist of the reports

The four sections of the Conference—medical service, public health service and administration, education and training, and handicapped children—were composed of specialists working in different fields but, with few exceptions, significantly similar threads were woven into the patterns of the reports presented. Among these were:

1. The importance of individual rather than mass methods of dealing with children, in homes, clinics, schools, courts, and institutions.
2. The child himself, the total child, as the unit for consideration—rather than the child as a patient, a pupil, a scholar, an athlete, or a "case."
3. The social aspects of the child's life—his home relationships and his relationships with those touching his life outside the home—as being equally important with his body and his mind in building up his personality and character.
4. The responsibility of society to provide a sound economic and social basis for family life and to conserve wholesome family life by every means at its command, whenever it is threatened by national or individual disaster.
5. The need for bringing to parents the most authentic information on child care and training, and for a foundation of all technical service to children in the understanding, support, and cooperation of individual fathers and mothers.
6. The establishment of specialized services upon the basis of adequate professional preparation and skill, sufficiently compensated and supported by the public.
7. National, State, and local cooperation in providing the information and the services required for translating into the lives of children the recommendations growing out of the conference.
8. The basic and transcendent importance of child welfare work to the future of the nation.

Some of these points can be illustrated further by examples drawn from the reports and addresses.

The report of the Section on Education and Training stated: "Democracy demands universal education. Equality of opportunity has long been the ideal of the American child. There is grave danger, however, of confusing equality of opportunity with the sameness of educational training. No other type of government so much as democracy demands the adaptation of education to the individual differences which characterize her children. The danger of a dead level of mediocrity is more grave in a democracy than in any other form of government. Therefore, the first cardinal principle in the education and training for a democratic society is that each individual child should develop to his highest possible level of attainment . . . ."

The same report also stated, "Among the significant problems in character development is the modern tendency toward specialization. To the doctor the child is a typhoid patient; to the playground supervisor, a first baseman; to the teacher, a learner of arithmetic. At different times he may be different things to each of these specialists but too rarely is he a whole child to any of them . . . ."

The recommendations referring to child labor declared: "Child labor must wait upon child welfare. No economic need in prosperous America can be urged as justification for robbing a child of his childhood."

In presenting the report of the Committee on Delinquency, Dr. James S. Plant said: "The individual delinquent is not simply a child surrounded by a family, surrounded by a school, surrounded by an industry, but the child's parents, his teachers, his employer, through

their longings, through their cravings, through their desires, inextricably weave themselves into the child's life . . . ."

The report of the Committee on the Physically and Mentally Handicapped declared: "If we want civilization to march forward it will march not only on the feet of healthy children, but beside them, shoulder to shoulder, must go those others—those children we have called 'handicapped'—the lame ones, the blind, the deaf, and those sick in body and mind. All these children are ready to be enlisted in this moving army, ready to make their contribution to human progress; to bring what they have of intelligence, of capacity, of spiritual beauty. American civilization cannot ignore them.

"The handicapped child has a right:

1. To as vigorous a body as human skill can give him.
2. To an education so adapted to his handicap that he can be economically independent and have the chance for the fullest life of which he is capable.
3. To be brought up and educated by those who understand the nature of the burden he has to bear and who consider it a privilege to help him bear it.
4. To grow up in a world which does not set him apart, which looks at him, not with scorn or pity or ridicule—but which welcomes him, exactly as it welcomes every child, which offers him identical privileges and identical responsibilities.
5. To a life in which his handicap casts no shadow, but which is full day by day with those things which make it worthwhile, with comradeship, love, work, play, laughter and tears—a life in which these things bring continually increasing growth, richness, release of energies, joy in achievement."

Perhaps the most significant considerations of the Conference—made doubly so by the conditions in which the United States found itself due to the drought and the industrial depression—were those dealing with the economic aspects of family life.

In his address, James J. Davis, the Secretary of Labor, in speaking of these circumstances said, "No item is more important to the child or contributes more to our national welfare than the uninterrupted employment of American fathers at a wage which will provide security and a reasonable standard of living for their families. No one would say that this is an easy problem to solve, but, with President Hoover, I believe that a way must be found to prevent these cycles of industrial depression and provide adequate wages for American workmen!"

Low wages, unemployment, preventable accidents were among the causes of dependence, Grace Abbott, second Chief of the Children's Bureau, told the 1930 White House Conference Committee on Dependency and Neglect. Now, as in previous periods of industrial depression, the permanent burden had fallen upon the backs of little children. "It is no glory I am sure to anybody here to be told that this unemployment from which we are now suffering is world-wide. We don't sleep any better knowing that children the world around are suffering tonight because of unemployment."

Then she went on to describe the effects on children of the deprivations growing out of the depression. She said, "What does it do to children? It, of course, sends them into manhood and womanhood more subject to tuberculosis, more subject to disease than they otherwise would be; but it also does something to them that I shall leave to our friends, the psychiatrists, to explain when they live day by day without knowing what tomorrow is to bring forth. Children need not only food and a comfortable home, but they need above all things security . . . ."

The Children's Charter

The Children's Charter endorsed by the Conference contained 19 statements as to what every child needs for his education, health, welfare, and protection. It expressed the aspirations of the Nation for its children in words that are still vibrant and full of meaning. No other declaration as to the rights of children has had such acclaim or been so widely distributed in this country and abroad.

This statement of the fundamental rights

of the child is excerpted here:

THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER

President Hoover's White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, recognizing the rights of the child as the first rights of citizenship, pledges itself to these aims for the Children of America

I. For every child spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of life.

II. For every child understanding and the guarding of his personality as his most precious right.

III. For every child a home and that love and security which a home provides; and for the child who must receive foster care, the nearest substitute for his own home.

IV. For every child full preparation for his birth, his mother receiving prenatal, natal, and postnatal care; and the establishment of such protective measures as will make childbearing safer.

V. For every child health protection from birth through adolescence, including: periodical examinations and, where needed, care of specialists and hospital treatment . . . .

VI. For every child from birth through adolescence, promotion of health, including health instruction and a health program, wholesome physical and mental recreation, with teachers and leaders adequately trained.

VII. For every child a dwelling place safe, sanitary, and wholesome, with reasonable provisions for privacy, free from conditions which tend to thwart his development; and a home environment harmonious and enriching.

VIII. For every child a school which is safe from hazards, sanitary, properly equipped, lighted, and ventilated. For younger children nursery schools and kindergartens to supplement home care.

IX. For every child a community which recognizes and plans for his needs, protects him against physical dangers, moral hazards, and disease . . . and makes provision for his cultural and social needs.

X. For every child an education which, through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life; and through training and vocational guidance prepares him for a living which will yield him the maximum of satisfaction.

XI. For every child such teaching and training as will prepare him for successful parenthood, homemaking, and the rights of citizenship; and, for parents, supplementary training to fit them to deal wisely with the problems of parenthood.

XII. For every child education for safety and protection against accidents to which modern conditions subject him . . . .

XIII. For every child who is blind, deaf, crippled, or otherwise physically handicapped, and for the child who is mentally handicapped, such measures as will early discover and diagnose his handicap, provide care and treatment, and so train him that he may become an asset to society rather than a liability . . . .

XIV. For every child who is in conflict with society the right to be dealt with intelligently as society's charge, not society's outcast . . . .

XV. For every child the right to grow up in a family with an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income as the surest safeguard against social handicaps.

XVI. For every child protection against labor that stunts growth, either physical or mental, that limits education, that deprives children of the rights of comradeship, of play, and of joy.

XVII. For every rural child as satisfactory schooling and health services as for the city child, and an extension . . . of social, recreational, and cultural facilities.

XVIII. To supplement the home and the school in the training of youth . . . every stimulation and encouragement should be given to the extension and development of the voluntary youth organizations.

XIX. To make everywhere available these minimum protections of the health and welfare

of children, there should be a district, county, or community organization for health, education, and welfare . . . .

For EVERY child these rights, regardless of race, or color, or situation, wherever he may live under the protection of the American flag.

The Children's Charter served—and today continues to serve—as an extremely useful guide to the people of the United States concerned with the well-being of children.

Outcome of the Conference

Followup programs were organized in many States. Frequently they represented the first statewide attempt to bring together the various professional groups and agencies to review children's needs and improve services.

One of the outstanding results of the Conference was a great advance in the field of pediatrics and pediatric education. Conference findings and recommendations served as a base for the children's measures under the Social Security Act (1935).

The 32 volumes of Conference findings appeared over a period of several years and were representative of an era of detailed factfinding and report making. But to condense or coordinate these findings into a composite whole or to convert them into a program of action for children was almost impossible. Perhaps such a program could not have survived even if it had existed—the Conference was held at the beginning of the depression—a depression that steadily deepened and became more bewildering during the years in the course of which the final volumes of the report appeared.

White House Conference on Children in a Democracy (1940)

The fourth White House Conference on Children was concerned with all children, not merely with those handicapped by circumstance. This was a major development—and a significant one for the future.

The base line for the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy was family and community life. Its specific purpose was to develop a frame of reference for equipping American children "for the successful practice of democracy."

In mid-January 1940, approximately 700 men and women gathered in Washington to examine in detail the state of child life in the United States, the forces that shape it, and the conditions requisite to health and opportunity for all children.

A few scattered young people sat in with the group as observers and commentators. They were the vanguard of the great numbers of youth who were to take their place in the 1950 and 1960 Conferences.

Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins summarized the task which faced the Conference by saying:

> "No matter what the storms, no matter what the stresses, no matter what the world problems are, both economic and social problems, it is our intent and purpose to keep our minds firmly fixed upon the welfare of our children and to promote that welfare under all conditions, recognizing that they are the vitality . . . of this great experiment which we are making on this continent.
>
> "One of our problems in this, as well as in every other Nation, is how to make it possible for the children who are the future generation to partake of the best that the Nation is able to give, while they are in the formative stage, while their health is being built up. This Conference has brought in people of many backgrounds, people with many points of view, people with a great variety of expert knowledge . . . ."

The keynote of the Conference was struck by the often repeated phrase, "Our concern is every child."

The content of the report sent to members prior to the Conference considered the major factors affecting children in the United States, including the characteristics of American family life, incomes of families, their dwellings, and their assistance in times of need; education; children with special needs; and administrative factors and finance affecting public action.

Throughout the report, recommendations for further study, for strengthening personnel and training standards, for financial assistance, and for administrative improvements were recurring themes.

But the fundamental question still remained, "Can a free people rear children who will become responsible citizens in a democracy? Can they rear children who, in their turn, will maintain and cherish their freedom?"

Elizabeth Christman of the National Women's Trade Union League, a member of the report committee, in her discussion of the report at the opening session spoke for an adequate wage for the breadwinner as the key to the welfare of the child: "The democratic way of life means economic freedom to enjoy its less tangible blessings."

Dr. C. E. A. Winslow of Yale University, speaking as a "public health man," pointed out that the National Health Survey had made it "abundantly" clear that "as one goes down the economic scale, sickness increases and medical care declines . . . . it will be very bad economy to save money at the cost of the minds and the bodies of the children of this country. We cannot afford to let things rest as they are."

Floyd W. Reeves, Director of the American Youth Commission, believed that the United States should not be content to let educational opportunity hinge on economics: "We cannot assure education for young people beyond the compulsory age merely by providing facilities. It must be made possible for them to use those facilities."

W. R. Ogg, Director of Research, American Farm Bureau Federation, stressed the sections of the report that would insure equal opportunity for all children: "We talk about conservation of soil, water, forest, and so on, but what about the conservation of the greatest of all our resources—children? . . . Certainly they are worth spending tax revenue to improve and expand educational facilities, medical and health facilities, and other vital child welfare services."

A youthful mother of six claimed the right to speak as a parent, not as an organization or a "cause." She asked the Conference to realize that the tangibles proposed in the report were not enough to make the American way of life. "We want for our children the high adventure of pushing out the boundaries of brotherhood. So, we ask you to see that these various proposals imply our democratic faith in the value of every individual, his right to the opportunity of development, his ability to work with his fellows and his willingness to pay the price of liberty by assuming responsibility. This faith we must transmit to our children, in the only way that can give it validity. We must live it ourselves."

At the close of the first session, the Conference broke up into groups to discuss various aspects of the report. In all of these groups, discussion was lively and oftentimes heated. Some hewed to the line of fundamentals. Others lost themselves in debates over phraseology. Some battled over issues and policies. Some thought the preliminary reports showed too little recognition of what had been accomplished; some, that they failed to point to new and fresh ways of meeting children's needs. For the most part, the reports were not modified greatly in terms of content or approach when they went back to the committee.

The outstanding virtue of the Conference report as it was finally accepted by the Conference was that it brought together a great mass of facts about the "growing" conditions of American children. However, the report presented statements of principle rather than a program of action. Perhaps this accounts more than anything else for its lack of impact on action groups.

The report is presented to the President

On the evening of the second day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the re-

port of the Conference. The President said:

> "Last April when this Conference first met, I asked you to consider two things: First how a democracy can best serve its children; and, the corollary, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.
>
> "Since that time—since last April—a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness. All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part they are going to play in the future of our American Nation . . . .
>
> "You . . . have charted a course, a course for 10 years to come. Nevertheless, the steps that we take now, in this year of 1940, are going to determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.
>
> "I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, for health protection, for education, for moral or spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened."

The last session of the Conference was devoted to consideration of what the Conference members could do to keep the report from sliding into oblivion. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt urged each member of the Conference to take a personal responsibility for carrying back home the ideas embodied in the report and, by using the report as a frame of reference, to study how his own community could improve its services for children.

Homer Folks, who had taken an active part in the three previous White House Conferences, expressed much the same view when he said, "One other group must be followed up, perhaps the most important and possibly the most difficult, namely, ourselves . . . . Under the pressure of our usual continuing interests, are we not likely to lose sight of the logical implications of what we have done here? We must organize procedures by which we may followup even ourselves, lest we forget."

A call to action

The "Call To Action" at the end of the Conference was the dramatic highlight of the Conference. It declared:

> "This Conference is convinced that the recommendations submitted on this report are essential to the well-being of the children of the United States. Many can be put into effect in the near future but the Conference has not limited itself to matters susceptible to immediate action . . . . This is a program for 10 years, and some of it for a longer period . . . . The Conference believes that its proposals are well within the capacities of the American people and that the economic well-being of the country will be enhanced. What the American people wish to do they can do.
>
> " 'Somewhere within these United States, within the past few years, was born a child who will be elected in 1980 to the most responsible office in the world, the Presidency of the United States,' said Homer Folks at the first session of the Conference. 'We cannot guess his name or whereabouts. He may come from any place and from any social or economic group. He may now be in the home of a soft-coal miner, or in the family of a sharecropper, or quite possibly in the home of the unemployed . . . or he may be surrounded with every facility, convenience, and protection which money can buy.
>
> " 'If we could unroll the scroll of the future enough to learn his name and whereabouts, how many things we would wish to have done for him, how carefully we would wish to guard his healthy growth, his surroundings . . . .'
>
> "What we might wish to do for that unknown child . . . we must be ready to do for every child, so that he may be ready to live a full life, satisfying to himself and useful to his community and Nation.
>
> "This document is a call to action: to do now those things that can be done now and to plan those that must be left for tomorrow . . . .
>
> "The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy holds these to be the convictions of the American people:

"That democracy can flourish only as citizens have faith in the integrity of their fellow men and capacity to cooperate with them in advancing the end of personal and social living.

"That such faith and such capacity can best be established in childhood and within the family circle. Here the child should find affection which gives self-confidence, community of interest which induces cooperation, ethical values which influence conduct . . . ."

Recommendations

The discussions at the Conference resulted eventually in 98 recommendations—recommendations that formed a program to be initiated, not in 1 year, but during the next 10 years:

They dealt with all phases of child life in all parts of America.

They were based wholly and soundly on actual experience.

They were framed with due regard to the resources of the country.

They did not call for revolutionary changes in any present activities for children, but rather supplementing, strengthening, and revising these activities so as to realize their purposes more completely.

They recognized the increasing role in child welfare of government—local, State, and Federal—but urged the retention and development of voluntary agencies in those fields in which they could be effective.

Few if any of the recommendations called for measures that were new. They were chiefly expansions and improvements.

Followup

Nationally, the plan finally adopted proposed the creation of both a nongovernmental National Citizens' Committee, to which responsibility would be given for leadership in the followup program, and a Federal Interagency Committee.

The National Citizens' Committee—completed by June 1940 and comprising 25 members—undertook to stimulate the interest of some groups in each State to study the recommendations of the Conference in relation to situations surrounding the State's own children, to discover what needed to be done for their protection and advancement, and to initiate measures which would be of benefit to them.

Twenty such State committees were established. These committees were organized with the "official sanction" of the Governors or as voluntary groups. They represented a wide range of people concerned with the well-being of children. In addition, 20 national organizations planned programs designed to follow up on Conference recommendations.

Shortly after the Conference, many of these committees sponsored statewide or regional meetings. In some States, local committees were organized.

Both the national and State committees were almost at once engulfed in considerations of national defense and later in wartime activities. Gradually, the 1940 White House Conference followup, for the most part, lost its identity. But a new pattern for followup had been established—and this pattern was to be followed in all subsequent conferences.

The Federal Interagency Committee, composed of representatives of 30 Federal agencies, was organized in March 1940 for the purpose of coordinating the work of Federal Departments in cooperation with the National Citizens' Committee and State and local followup programs.

Within the next decade, three formal organizations concerned with children and youth were established and have continued in existence to the present. The first was the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth which was formed at the request of President Harry S. Truman in May 1948 for several purposes, one of which was to "assist the Children's Bureau in laying the groundwork for the 1950 White House Conference." With the Administrator of the Federal Security Agency as Chairman, the Chief of the Children's Bureau as Vice-Chairman, and the Children's Bureau providing the secretariat, the Committee began to plan, with various national, State, and local groups, for the next Conference. In addition, Bureau staff provided consultation and assistance to State Committees for Children and Youth which requested them.

The other two organizations, those known

today as the Council of National Organizations for Children and Youth (officially designated in 1953) and the National Council of State Committees for Children and Youth (known as the National Advisory Council on State and Local Action until 1956), were outgrowths of the advisory councils established by the National Committee in 1949 to prepare for the Midcentury White House Conference.

Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (1950)

The Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth which met in Washington in December 1950 was a major step toward a nationwide effort to deal with one of the most important problems of the decade: How can we develop in children the mental, emotional, and spiritual qualities essential to individual happiness and responsible citizenship? What physical, emotional, and social conditions are necessary to this development?

No earlier Conference had brought together so great a variety of citizen interest and experience. None had had such a low average age, for 500 of the 4,800 delegates were under 21.

The Conference was supported primarily by voluntary funds. Congress appropriated a total of $150,000 over a 2-year period, while the balance of the $413,000 budget was secured from voluntary sources.

Working as members of Conference committees, cooperating agencies, or on State and local committees or youth commissions, for more than 2 years, State and local delegates gathered facts about children's needs, surveyed local conditions, pulled together available knowledge, and otherwise contributed to the store of written material being assembled in preparation for the Conference.

Every State and Territory and 1,000 counties had these committees. Over 100,000 citizens contributed to their work. Thirty-seven units of the Federal Government had pulled together a picture of their services for children. Researchers and students from over 150 universities, foundations, and other centers helped in surveying the present knowledge of what contributes to healthy personality development and how it is achieved.

In December 1950, armed with four printed documents representing a synthesis of this accumulation, the delegates arrived at the Nation's capital to prepare a "platform" for meeting the problems which prevent children and young people from achieving healthy personalities. Stunned by the tragic turn of events in Korea, they faced the grim realization that nothing they could say or do would be of any value to the Nation's young unless it helped them develop the kind of personality that could withstand tension and adversity.

The Conference gets underway

Here, no attempt will be made to give a complete account of the Conference. The emphasis will be on highlights and on flavor.

President Truman set the grave tone of the Conference when he warned the members that the Nation faces "the greatest challenge in our history."

> "We cannot insulate our children from the uncertainties of the world in which we live or from the impact of the problems which confront us all. What we *can* do—and *must* do—is to equip them to meet these problems, to do their part in the total effort, and to build up those inner resources of

character which are the main strength of the American people."

During the Conference, a few dignitaries spoke, inspiringly and informatively, at general sessions and in the 31 panel meetings. But these only set the stage for 39 workshops and one great "town meeting" where every one of the official delegates had a chance, and seemed to take it, of hammering out the 67 recommendations to be presented to the Nation. The Conference also adopted a *Pledge to Children* (p. 20).

Oscar R. Ewing, Federal Security Administrator and chairman of the Conference's National Committee, stated *the purposes of the Conference:*

> "We aim to further the development of a healthy personality, through the contributions of family life, the church, the school, health services, social services, vocational guidance, and placement services. We are exploring, at the same time, economic forces; working conditions; leisure time; and the influence of the law, the courts, and the protective services.
>
> "We aim to further healthy personality development of children in special situations—children in families with inadequate income; children with part-time parents; children on the move; children with severe mental and physical limitations; children with serious emotional disorders; and children who rebel.
>
> "We aim, finally, to determine how a community can assess what needs to be done in planning creatively for young people . . . and how best to implement the recommendations and findings that come out of this conference."

Major responsibility for nurturing healthy personality development, the conferees generally agreed, rests with the parents. Parents are the most important influence in their children's lives—but they are not to blame for everything that goes wrong. "If children know they are fundamentally liked, accepted, and believed in, they can stand the mistakes their parents inevitably make."

Opinion was unanimous as to the importance of love in the child's early life. If a child has "a pair of good parents who love him truly," maintained Dr. Benjamin Spock, "he can put up with a lot of other deprivations."

All institutions and individuals touching the lives of children and youth, it was stressed over and over again, have a part to play in the great task of creating an environment in which healthy personality has a chance to bloom.

This calls for more and better trained professional workers—workers trained not merely in their own specialty but also in an understanding of how the normal child grows in healthy personality.

Since this was democracy in action, there were bound to be controversies—universal military training, publicly supported nursery schools, Federal aid to education, and disability insurance, to name a few, provoking the most passionate arguments. None, however, disrupted the apparently universal agreement that the child should be regarded as a whole rather than treated in segments.

All through the discussions of child growth came warnings against scaring young parents with scientific theories. This in fact seemed to be one of the Conference's own conflicts: how to spread far and wide the knowledge of the basic tenets of mental health and good child care without burdening parents with a sense of anxiety and guilt. More and earlier parent education was urged as a necessity, but a woman in one of the workshops complained: "Mothers are not ready for all the psychology and psychiatry they're expected to practice on their children. There's no stability in us. We jump from one feeling to another and end up feeling completely inadequate."

The basic points which emerged from the six workshops concerned with the various phases of child development were summarized by a joint committee as:

> The changing needs of each child depend on his individuality, his environment, and particularly his relationship to his parents.
>
> The feelings for children on the part of parents and professional people are more important than the techniques they use.
>
> Attitudes in giving advice are more important than the advice given.

Both boys and girls need to be close to men and women for good emotional development.

A general healthy personality is not established once and for all at any age period, but can be strengthened or weakened at any stage in life.

The experts at the Conference were aware that *our present knowledge of children's needs is far from definitive.* Among those who called for an interdisciplinary attack in carrying on more research was Leonard Mayo, vice-chairman of the Conference's National Committee.

Some of the blocks standing in the way of intelligent application of this knowledge were identified as: a failure to test theories sufficiently; inadequate collation of the results of research; the personality factor—"if the truth hurts in the psychological sense we do not set upon it readily."

"Though our knowledge is incomplete in most aspects of personality development," the conferees agreed, "there is plenty of knowledge to do an infinitely better job than is being done today." The "most obvious and immediate needs" were: more and earlier help for emotionally neglected children and improvement of the schools.

A pair of loving parents—offering a "well-rounded, easygoing kind of love"—was seen as the one essential for every child under 6.

The school-aged child, too, was being denied opportunities for healthy growth. "Our schools are too few and too crowded, the equipment is antiquated, the teachers are too few and many of them inadequately trained, or temperamentally unsuited to their work, the programs—often at community insistence—are more concerned with the three R's than in helping children develop their potentialities, and the proportion of national income going to public education is falling."

Adolescents are also short-changed by our educational system, the conferees agreed, for they are denied "an adequate sense of acceptance into the grown-up world and of dignified participation in it."

The most vivid indictment against schools for the unreality of their programs came from Allison Davis of the University of Chicago.

"The vast store of ability in millions of children in the lower socioeconomic groups is largely wasted because their teachers do not understand the basic cultural habits of the working groups," Professor Davis charged.

Professor Davis told of studies carried on by social anthropologists showing that behavior frowned on as "delinquent" by "middle class teachers, clinicians, and psychiatrists" is in slum children often a perfectly realistic, adaptive, and socially acceptable response to reality.

Among the sad results of this misunderstanding of socioeconomic differences are "an unrealistic and extremely uninteresting curriculum" and "culturally biased" intelligence tests.

Discussion of leisure-time activities brought out their potentialities as educational forces, as well as the opportunities they provide for play and self-expression. There seemed to be general agreement that adults should "recognize and develop the traits acquired through leisure which lead to healthier children—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually." Other delegates saw recreation as providing a means of escape, a method for expressing inner feelings, development of social attributes, experience in group cooperation.

How to close the gap between knowledge and application in the institutions affecting children was a major concern of the Conference. Is this knowledge being put to use in the family, the churches, the schools, leisure time programs, vocational aid, health and welfare services, the courts? "Not well enough," cried delegate after delegate, bringing an abundance of testimony as to the uneven sensitivity to children's needs within these institutions.

The widespread incidence of broken homes and anxiety-ridden parents was offered as evidence that the first place for improved application must be within the family itself. Immaturity among adults emerged as the chief source of family difficulties, and this in turn was blamed in large part on early childhood experiences. The conferees found themselves caught in the vicious circle of immature parent, unstable child, immature parent. Some of the weapons suggested for breaking this sequence were increased family welfare and marriage

counseling services, preparation for marriage in the schools and colleges, sex education, community use of mass media of communication for education in "family centered living," "well family conferences."

Religion came into the picture as a source of strength for withstanding today's tensions. The common elements of all faiths that can be helpful in personality development were sought in a panel meeting of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish representatives.

"Religion is not magic," said Monsignor John J. McClafferty, "nor is it philosophy, or ethics, or art. Essentially it is the liaison between man and God."

Rabbi Uri Miller of the Synagogue Council of America maintained that, because religion stresses the importance of the individual, the religious person is less likely to have a sense of rejection.

Culture patterns received heavy emphasis from the platform and in discussion groups as major forces affecting children's lives. But it was Margaret Mead, of the American Museum of Natural History, who described the effects of the changing, unpredictable nature of modern life on families and children:

> "American children are growing up within the most rapidly changing culture of which we have any record in the world, within a culture where for several generations, each generation's experience has differed sharply from the last, and in which the experience of the youngest child in a large family will be extraordinarily different from that of the first born. Mothers cannot look back to the experience of their mothers, nor even to that of their older sisters; young husbands and fathers have no guides to the behavior which they are assuming today. So long standing and so rapid have been these processes of change that expectation of change and anxiety about change have been built into our character as a people."

Miss Mead found strengths and dangers in the characteristic mobility of American life. This, she said, has brought about flexibility, awareness, and "a capacity to shift and change, to pause and weigh." But it has also exacted a price—"the price of loneliness, of the sense that each ventures along a path unguarded by the friendly spirits of past generations."

It was obviously the sense of the Conference that discrimination—racial and religious—is a major obstacle of healthy personality development. Testimony as to its damaging effects came out all through the Conference as well as in the specific panel and workshop set up to examine the subject. These discussions dealt with the effects of discrimination on the discriminator as well as on those discriminated against.

The effects on children of economic forces influencing family income, housing, neighborhood were also considered. Ewan Clague, of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, pointed out that while American incomes are high and rising, many children are born into economically substandard families, and the majority of them live in areas with the least wealth and the fewest services. "Any economic investment of funds in our youngsters today will maintain the greatness of our nation," he said.

Not only children in families of inadequate income, but children of migrants and others "on the move" and children of working mothers were also regarded as having special problems. A few delegates also pointed out that children of the wealthy likewise face special barriers to healthy development.

Repeatedly throughout the Conference came assertions that the delegates' findings must apply to *all* children and youth, but it was recognized that there were children in special situations with special problems to be considered. Parent education was designated as the first essential in building healthy personalities in children with mental or physical handicaps, with severe emotional disturbances, with rebellious behavior. Teamwork was called for among all the agencies serving such children.

Interest at the Conference focused not only on children's needs and what should be done about them, but also on how to go about doing it. Workshops and panels on community organization were heavily attended. They emphasized the importance of effective planning machinery, including the cooperation of voluntary and public agencies; teamwork among the professions; widening the circle of citizen participation; planning *with* instead of *for* youth.

Teamwork among the professions was implicit in the Conference's focus. Unlike many another large assembly, it never broke down into small segments of narrow interests with the experts concentrating only on their own specialties. Educators, social workers, vocational counselors, pediatricians, psychiatrists, nurses, public health administrators—all worked together in preparatory committees, in the workshops, and on the panels. The child remained whole.

Discussion of *mass media dealt almost entirely with television.* Though there were some who decried the poor taste and violence in many of the programs to which children are exposed, the emphasis was on making the most educationally of this new medium and on more effective parental supervision. After hearing about the large portion of the day many children spent watching television, Lyman Bryson, of Columbia University, remarked: "Apparently the only noise one does not hear in the living room today is the sound of the parental foot going down."

No topic occupied so much Conference thought and comment as *the effects on children and young people of the threat of war.* Scarcely a speaker or delegate from the President to the high school youth refrained from mention of the grave situation facing the Nation. Two themes predominated: Services to children must be strengthened to provide as much protection as possible from the hazards of war and the disrupting factors of mobilization; young people, on whom the main burden of the crisis will fall, must be given whatever support they need to face the difficulties ahead.

The Conference's *wide circle of citizen participation* was representative of all the racial, religious, and ethnic groups—Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, white, Negro, American Indian, Japanese American, Spanish American.

Finally, and far from least, there was *youth participation,* a far from "nominal" representation of those who were the chief concern of the Conference. The 500 young people, who ranged in age from 12 to 23, came to the Conference as members of the Advisory Committee on Youth Participation—representative of many national voluntary organizations—and as members of State delegations.

There was an earnest quality about these young people. They were troubled, but they went about their business with a simple directness that was a challenge to the adults. One youth put this in words:

"Yesterday is gone; forget about it. Tomorrow is ahead; don't worry too much about it. Today is here; *do* something!"

At the close of the Conference, the delegates endorsed the following:

PLEDGE TO CHILDREN

To you, our children, who hold within you our most cherished hopes, we, the members of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, relying on your full response, make this pledge:

From your earliest infancy we give you our love, so that you may grow with trust in yourself and in others.

We will recognize your worth as a person and we will help you to strengthen your sense of belonging.

We will respect your right to be yourself and at the same time help you to understand the rights of others, so that you may experience cooperative living.

We will help you develop initiative and imagination, so that you may have the opportunity freely to create.

We will encourage your curiosity and your pride in workmanship, so that you may have the satisfaction that comes from achievement.

We will provide the conditions for wholesome play that will add to your learning, to your social experience, and to your happiness.

We will illustrate by precept and example the value of integrity and the importance of moral courage.

We will encourage you always to seek the truth.

We will provide you with all opportunities possible to develop your own faith in God.

We will open the way for you to enjoy the arts and to use them for deepening your understanding of life.

We will work to rid ourselves of prejudice and discrimination, so that together we may achieve a truly democratic society.

We will work to lift the standard of living and to improve our economic practices, so that you may have the material basis for a full life.

We will provide you with rewarding educational opportunities, so that you may develop your talents and contribute to a better world.

We will protect you against exploitation and undue hazards and help you grow in health and strength.

We will work to conserve and improve family life and, as needed, to provide foster care according to your inherent rights.

We will intensify our search for new knowledge in order to guide you more effectively as you develop your potentialities.

As you grow from child to youth to adult, establishing a family life of your own and accepting larger social responsibilities, we will work with you to improve conditions for all children and youth.

Aware that these promises to you cannot be fully met in a world at war, we ask you to join us in a firm dedication to the building of a world society based on freedom, justice, and mutual respect.

So may you grow in joy, in faith in God and in man, and in those qualities of vision and of the spirit that will sustain us all and give us new hope for the future.

Accomplishments of the 1950 Conference

The box scores of accomplishment—tangible and intangible—of the 1950 Conference are still being tallied.

Shortly after the Conference, the National Midcentury Committee for Children and Youth was formed to publicize the findings, promote action on the 67 recommendations, and to encourage further research. This Committee carried on its work until 1953 when it was dissolved.

This left the National Advisory Council on State and Local Action for Children and Youth, representing 51 State and Territorial committees, without a central informational exchange. To fill this gap, the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth signed an agreement with the Council in October 1953 under which an informational exchange would be provided by the Committee. This statement of understanding is reviewed every two years and updated in light of current developments.

In 1954, these two organizations met together as the Joint Conference on Children and Youth. Their cooperative efforts were joined by those of the Council of National Organizations in sponsoring three more such conferences in 1955, 1956, and 1958. During these meetings, the progress and circumstances of the Nation's children and youth were discussed. The agenda for the latter two meetings provided for a discussion of the plans and structure for the 1960 White House Conference.

For the first time in the history of the White House Conferences on Children and Youth, such committees survived and functioned during the time between Conferences.

Other tangible outcomes of the Midcentury Conference were many.

Most of the States held "little White House Conferences" called by the governors to discuss Conference findings. Some of these drew well over a thousand people. In addition, some States held smaller meetings on a statewide basis.

Conference materials were disseminated widely—and continue to circulate. They have appeared in scores of textbooks for high school and college students.

A book for technical workers, ***Personality in the Making***, by Helen Witmer and Ruth Kotinsky, appeared in 1953.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States in its decision outlawing racial segregation in public schools cited findings in the Conference Fact Finding Report of the harmful effects of segregation on children.

The Children's Bureau added to its list of

"best sellers" a publication entitled *A Healthy Personality for Your Child,* a popular version by Dr. James L. Hymes of the Fact Finding Report. Close to a million copies of this pamphlet had been sold by the Government Printing Office by December, 1966.

Religious groups, parent-teacher associations, 4-H Clubs, civic groups, popular magazines have issued their own versions of Conference findings. Radio and television programs have found them to be rich sources for material.

The various professions—social work, nursing, public health, medicine—incorporated the findings in the training of workers at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and in institutes and refresher courses for people already working in the field.

In many communities, services for children, both public and voluntary, were reviewed, modified, and extended as a result of Conference activities.

The legal base for services to children and their parents in many States were reexamined and modified.

All of this adds up to persuasive evidence in many areas that children and their needs are better understood than before the Midcentury White House Conference and that this understanding will spread and deepen in the years ahead.

Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth (1960)

The Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth, which met March 27 through April 1, 1960, sought to find ways "to promote opportunities for children and youth to realize their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity."

The 1960 White House Conference followed several traditions established by previous Conferences in preparing for and during the Conference.

Once again, the Children's Bureau assumed its leadership role as initiator of advanced planning and coordinator of early information-gathering preceding the appointment of the President's National Committee. Even before President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the call for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, preparations had been underway. The three coordinating groups from the 1950 Conference—now the Council of National Organizations for Children and Youth and the Federal Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth—met in joint conferences in 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1958. In 1956, the joint conference authorized a committee to consider preliminary steps toward a 1960 Conference. At the request of the Chief of the Children's Bureau, the joint committee met in 1957 to discuss a possible scope and theme for the Conference. During 1958 and 1959, several ad hoc groups of physicians, educators, and social workers were convened by the Chief to discuss methods of staging a far-reaching and effective Conference.

As had those that preceded it, this Conference brought together representatives from both governmental and nongovernmental agencies concerned with the well-being of children and youth. National voluntary organizations—including churches, synagogues, health, welfare, and educational agencies, recreation, human relations, labor, community groups—sent their representatives.

In the fall of 1958, President Eisenhower appointed a national committee to be responsible for planning the 1960 Conference.

Included among the 92 members of the committee were community leaders, representatives of the various disciplines concerned with children, and 10 young people of high school or college age chosen for their leadership in school, church, and community activities.

Total expenditures for the Conference including followup activities were slightly over $1 million, derived almost equally from the Federal Government and private sources.

The partnership, carried over from the 1950 White House Conference, among the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth, the National Council of State Committees for Children and Youth, and the Council of National Organizations, made planning for the Golden Anniversary Conference far broader in scope than for any of the previous White House Conferences.

The participants had laid the groundwork for their activities at the Conference back in their home communities, through local or State Committees, or through the national organizations with which they were affiliated. They brought to the Conference not only the results of their own inquiries, but information gained through study of the eight volumes of material on children and youth prepared for the Conference. Two of these volumes were based on the participants' own preconference efforts, and the others were prepared by experts of various kinds.

Most of the State Committees sponsored a youth council or committee. In most States, at least one youth was a member of the policy making committee. In the 1960 Conference, youth played an important role—a role that had been growing and expanding since they were first included in the 1940 Conference.

The Conference gets underway

The Golden Anniversary White House Conference opened on the evening of March 27, 1960. Attending the opening session were 11,000 persons—7,600 delegates and 3,400 invited guests.

President Eisenhower addressed the opening assembly, emphasizing the importance of the delegates' mission and outlining the basic purposes of the Conference:

> "First . . . you are working with the most precious resources of our Nation: a whole generation of Americans who will someday make their country's policies and dispose its great power . . . .
>
> "Second, this process of preparation for tomorrow's leadership grows increasingly difficult as rapid and momentous changes alter the look of tomorrow's world . . . .
>
> ". . . within this great context of change and accommodation there are certain imperishable values which must neither be changed nor abandoned . . . .
>
> ". . . for civilization is a matter of spirit; of conviction and belief; of self-reliance and acceptance of responsibility; of happiness in constructive work and service; of devotion to valued tradition. It is a religious faith; it is a shared attitude toward life and living . . . ."

For the first 3 days of the Conference, the delegates attended one of five concurrent assemblies devoted to widely inclusive themes: assessing ideals and values in the changing world of children and youth; the impact of change on children and youth; adapting to change and innovation; the effects on children and youth of science, technology, population pressures; and world events.

Following the theme assemblies, there were 18 concurrent forums, each concerned with a different topic. Nine focused on various forces that influence the young person's immediate world—environment, mobility, support, nurture, opportunity, free time, mass communications, human resources, and beliefs. Some of the forums dealt with aspects of developmental growth that confront all youth—as they move toward maturity from puberty to young adulthood; as learners and thinkers; as doers; as citizens—and other forums centered around children with special problems—those with mental handicaps; with social handicaps; children in conflict.

The Conference participants were assigned to the work groups and forums on the basis of their varied interests. This process of selection, which included keeping a balance of representation in each group, was made by a computer. In addition, each work group included a num-

ber of the young people themselves.

It was in the 210 small work groups that the forum topics were hammered out into recommendations—ranging from "the significance of a personal faith for children and youth" to "the identification and the treatment of the mentally retarded."

Teams composed of representatives from the different work groups weeded out duplicate recommendations which were then submitted by the work groups to a forum. The approximately 400 people comprising each forum voted to accept or reject each recommendation. No recommendations were voted on by the Conference as a whole.

During their deliberations, and especially through their many recommendations, the conferees made it clear that if children and youth were to have opportunities to realize "their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity," major steps would have to be taken to improve services in the fields of health, welfare, education, and juvenile delinquency control. Also, steps would have to be taken to eliminate racial discrimination in all areas of child life.

An overview of the Conference

The conferees brought to the Golden Anniversary White House Conference a rich assortment of backgrounds, personalities, and interests. Yet despite this diversity—and regardless of the subject matter of their work groups—out of the participants' deliberations emerged some common threads of major concern. President Eisenhower had anticipated some of these when, at the opening session, he spoke of the importance of the Conference mission.

At that time, he had singled out juvenile delinquency as a problem of worldwide concern to which the Conference must address itself. Pointing out that its causes are "multiple," he said that "multiple measures must be used to weed them out." Yet he warned against a tendency to generalize pessimistically about today's youth.

"I have an unshakable faith in the overwhelming majority of fine, earnest, high-spirited youngsters who comprise this rising generation of Americans" he told the Conference. "A happy family is the surest way to prevent failures in our society."

However, a widespread uneasiness about the possible toxic byproducts of affluence was clearly evident throughout the Conference. Juvenile delinquency was reported to be more prevalent in times of prosperity, and one cause suggested was the resentment of our Nation's socially and economically disadvantaged young people at their inability to get the things that today stand for success.

"To cure delinquency," said one speaker, "we must cure ourselves."

Another speaker saw our society as "30 seconds to midnight," our only hope lying in a rather immediate filling of "the vacuum at the value core"—both in the inner man and in the social structure. Another called for "a defense in depth," maintaining that "moral and spiritual values must never be dealt with in isolation from social issues." He and many others called for full acceptance of minorities as a moral imperative.

The rapidity of social change and the complexity of the economy were frequently cited as causes for a sense of individual helplessness among both youth and adults. One youth said in a work group: "I'm part of a generation that is faced with daily evidence that the H-bomb may drop tomorrow. We need something that tells us that life is worth something—has meaning."

But an assembly speaker saw the complexities of life today as an opportunity for personal fulfillment through the acceptance of cooperative social responsibility. "It has been well said that today's hero, like today's saint, must be an organization man," he commented.

No matter what kind of service to children was under discussion, an emphasis on the need for stepped-up training for all types of professional personnel recurred throughout the Conference. It was also the focus of the entire forum devoted to "Human Resources" and its related work groups. The competition for the educated in this country was termed one of the chief blocks to fulfilling the promises to children that were made in previous White House Conferences.

Over and over, the conferees called for expectations of "excellence" on the part of the schools. They asked especially for greater stim-

ulation of the gifted. But at least one educator maintained that such a goal need not conflict with equality of educational opportunities for all children regardless of their intellectual potentialities. He emphasized that persons who "accept the sophistry that equality inevitably means a commitment to mediocrity [overlook] the need for diversity of interest and varied intellectual power and special creativity."

Television, radio, motion pictures, advertising, and the press came in for some heavy criticism for not living up to their educational potentials. Incessant portrayals of violence and presenting force as a heroic way of obtaining desired goals which are often materialistic and superficial in nature were some of the criticisms aimed at mass media.

On the other hand, many conferees spoke of the values of TV in widening children's horizons and of its uses as a teaching aid. The need for more effective parental control over TV watching was stressed repeatedly. Indeed, many delegates expressed apprehension not only about the effects on the younger generation of too much television viewing, but of too much passive recreation in general.

Constantly during the Conference, the discussion reverted to the quality of parenthood and family life. Mothers were called "irresponsible" for going to work outside the home. Fathers, in general, were accused of substituting a "phony togetherness" for depth of relationship. The young people were especially hard on parents, accusing them of not setting good examples, of not being firm, of not allowing enough freedom of choice.

But parents also had their defenders. A sociologist, for example, denied the existence of a moral decline. He said that in bringing children into the world and in rearing the younger generation, there is more dedication in the adult world today than ever before. American women are increasingly combining homemaking with other concerns and are enjoying "richer, fuller lives." A young college student said: "There is a 'me' who I want to be, and it looks like my father and mother."

A few voices, including some youthful ones, suggested that young people themselves had a responsibility for their behavior, as well as for the kind of adults they would turn out to be. For example, in one work group, when a youth representative blamed the "wildness" of a teenage neighbor on the fact that his mother went out to work, a young German visitor said: "I think that by the time a person is a teenager, he has a responsibility for the way he behaves, and if he knows his mother has to work he ought to be ashamed for becoming wild."

Calls for strengthening parental adequacy suggested a host of approaches. They included the elimination of such social and economic ills as discrimination against minorities, unemployment in depressed areas, poor housing; providing educational programs such as family life courses for school children and parent education classes for adults; the provision of individualized services to parents with special difficulties—parents with mentally or physically handicapped children, mothers or fathers in one-parent families, and parents too emotionally immature to function adequately as parents.

Unmarried mothers usually come from deprived backgrounds and have known punishment all their lives, a social worker observed. They need interest and protective authority to keep them out of trouble—not more punishment, she maintained.

The normal processes of child development received considerable attention as did the kinds of health services that can help prevent impairment of these processes. Periodic and continuing medical care should be provided for all children, one work group concluded. The participants expressed concern over the quality of care. In a forum speech, a professor of public health referred to "our inability to provide adequate health services to certain groups of children"—those who depend on clinics for well child care.

This physician, and others, deprecated the rise in our Nation's infant mortality rate and the great discrepancies in rates among geographical areas and population groups. He linked this increase in infant mortality to lack of prenatal care. His concern was carried into at least one work group which recommended that a forceful attack be made to lower infant mortality and morbidity rates among minority groups.

New and increasing dangers to public health also received the conferees' attention—air pollution, water pollution, radiological hazards. A State health officer, in pointing out "the genetic hazards of radiation that pose an ominous threat to the health of the living and unborn generations," found it deplorable that only a few States have launched full-scale radiological health programs.

Much of the discussion on health centered upon children suffering from handicaps—mental, physical, or emotional. Emotional factors and interpersonal relationships that assist or impede treatment of children with any type of handicapping condition were under special scrutiny.

Concern was repeatedly expressed over the growing number of children with congenital malformations. In one work group, a suggestion was made for providing eugenic counseling as a possible deterrent. However, this was rejected as a recommendation on the grounds that not enough is as yet known about this field.

There was some difference of opinion over whether mentally retarded children should attend special or regular clinics. The group eventually decided that, in view of the chronic nature of mental retardation and the past tendency to neglect these children, special clinics are needed—at least, at the present time.

Highlights of the recommendations

By the night of Wednesday, March 30, 1960, 68 topic teams had finished their task of preparing recommendations for presentation to the 18 White House Conference forums. A total of 1,600 recommendations had been submitted by the various work groups.

Because of the volume of recommendations, the task of appraising the significance of the Conference proved a staggering assignment for Dr. Ruth A. Stout, Director of Field Programs, Kansas State Teachers Association, Topeka. On Friday morning, April 1, she told the conferees at the final plenary session that she had spent the entire night attempting to categorize all of the recommendations. The final tally, which brought together those that were identical or similar in intent, totaled 670 recommendations. Dr. Stout said that she had found in this vast outpouring of thought the universal conviction that "no child is too insignificant for consideration."

In their eagerness not to ignore a single facet of the lives of children, today and tomorrow, the participants had gone "overboard" in assuring that their beliefs were represented—and in expressing their faith in the essential dignity and worth of each individual. A complete summary of their recommendations, for obvious reasons, cannot be included here.

Throughout the Conference sessions, a panel of 18 young people had been "listeners" in the forums. After talking with many other youth participants, this panel drafted a statement of "youth priorities" for the decade 1960–1970. These priorities reflected many of the recommendations of the total Conference—but with a difference. They were fresh, global, and idealistic in the way that only youth can be idealistic.

YOUTH PRIORITIES 1960-1970

We, as youth, recognizing that meaningful action must be based on a sense of purpose, religious beliefs, personal values, and shared ideals, are fully aware of the gap between reality and our goals. We believe that the deepening of individual values and attainment of our common ideals can be achieved only by a realistic appraisal of, and active participation in the major issues now challenging us.

1. We believe that any infringement on equality of opportunity denies to youth of various

ethnic, creedal, and racial backgrounds the possibility for a full life. To eliminate these deprivations, we call for the substantial completion of school desegregation by 1970, the provision of equal access to housing for all individuals, and the elimination of discrimination in employment and advancement practices throughout the United States. We also affirm the right of all citizens to peaceful protest and nonviolent resistance against all forms of social injustice.

2. We recognize the disintegration of the family unit in American culture and call for a reemphasis of the family as a central force for democracy. This will promote facilitation of communication between adults and youth within the family circle, the schools, and religious institutions. Education of youth in the role of the family, and realization by community organizations that they must supplement and not compete with, the family should also be realized.

3. Education is the main basis for the broad political participation and individual mobility essential for a free society. To fulfill these needs we must provide varied educational opportunities to challenge each individual to realize his full abilities. It should be recognized that all institutions and programs designed to meet individual needs can and should maintain high standards. To do this, local, State, and Federal Governments, as well as individuals, businesses, and nonprofit bodies must greatly increase their support for education on all levels. Further, the teacher must be more adequately honored as an individual and recompensed as a skilled professional.

4. In order that all individuals throughout the world may have increased opportunity to attain their aspirations, we accept an imperative obligation on American youth to support and participate in positive national policies for the attainment of world peace with justice, the active support of human rights especially through the United Nations, the development of international understanding through exchanges and cooperative nonmilitary assistance, and the constructive involvement of youth in carrying out these policies, such as through service in expanded technical assistance programs. We urge the adoption of legislation empowering the President to provide for the conduct of a nongovernmental research group, university, or foundation to study the advisability and practicality of the establishment by the United States of a Youth Corps, under which young citizens will be trained and will serve in programs of technical and educational assistance in the underdeveloped areas; and that this commission study the relationship of such a program to the present system of compulsory military service.

5. Youth must recognize their obligation to participate in local, national, and State affairs through voluntary organizations and political activity. At the same time, adults should realize that youth have valuable and often unique contributions to make to policy formulation and program planning, as well as implementation, and have special ideas and interests worthy of consideration by local, State and national legislators and executives. We further recommend cooperative adult and youth efforts to make such participation effective.

6. We demand that high-quality books, music, cultural attractions, radio and television programs, and libraries be widely available and that mass media take the responsibility for informing and educating youth, as well as adults.

7. Acknowledging the increasing need for skilled workers and the shift from rural to urban work, we urge that the total community provide guidance, training, and creative work for youth interested in such programs. Full-time guidance counselors and effective vocational educational programs must be provided. Special emphasis should be given to the school dropout, the juvenile delinquent, and the mentally handicapped so that they may become useful citizens.

8. While only a small percentage of youth are juvenile delinquents, we recognize that they, as a result of causes such as mental health, broken homes, and economic and social deprivations, find themselves engaged in destruction, not achievement, of their potential. We believe that the ultimate solution to this problem lies in energetic attacks on specific causes. We urge that all efforts be made to rehabilitate and secure acceptance for these youths who are now delinquent.

9. We urge that youth and young adults be active participants on national, State, and local follow-up committees of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth. These com-

mittees should be a cooperative endeavor of adults and youth, as was the planning for this Conference.

The 670 recommendations did not lend themselves to a meaningful program of action on a nationwide basis. Instead they represented widespread concern of citizens of the United States for children. However, followup in the individual States was brisk and the achievements of many State's Committees were encompassing and fruitful.

Followup of the Conference

On the recommendation of the President's National Committee, the National Committee for Children and Youth was established jointly by the Council of National Organizations for Children and Youth, the National Council of State Committees for Children and Youth, and the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth in November 1960. Residual Conference funds from voluntary sources (approximately $210,000) were transferred to the new Committee for these purposes: "to encourage and stimulate the implementation of the findings of the 1960 Conference by appropriate public and private agencies and bodies, to coordinate the activities of its constituent groups, to provide for continuing exchange of information concerning children and youth, and to plan and sponsor appropriate joint activities by its constituent groups and others interested in children and youth." In addition, the Committee "should provide for the review and evaluation of its activities and those of its constituent groups in 1965 and should prepare and submit a report to the Nation."

In the years since the 1960 Conference, the National Committee for Children and Youth has produced publications on a variety of topics relating to young people. It has also joined with its constituent organizations in sponsoring three biennial joint Conferences on Children and Youth. In 1962, the Conference focused on youths' participation in community affairs. The primary concern of the 1964 Conference was how to translate new concepts into services for children and youth. In 1966, the Mid-Decade Conference was devoted to assessing how far the Nation had come since the 1960 Conference and how much more could be achieved before the 1970 Conference.

The National Committee for Children and Youth sponsored two special conferences which helped to call the Nation's attention to the plight of unemployed youth. These were the Conference on Unemployed Out-of-School Youth in Urban Areas, held in Washington, D.C., in 1961, and the National Conference on Problems of Rural Youth in a Changing Environment, held in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1963.

Although the National Committee on Children and Youth is continuing its activities, the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth is no longer a member. The latter group withdrew in October 1966, stating that "the National Committee for Children and Youth has substantially completed those of its functions which made it desirable for the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth to be a formal member," and that "the role of the National Committee is now evolving in ways which are constructive but which indicate that the relationship of the Interdepartmental Committee and the National Committee should also change."

The diversity and multiplicity of Conference recommendations sparked followup activities in many sectors of the Nation, particularly within the organizations that had planned the Conference.

With a congressional appropriation of $150,000, the Children's Bureau established a Special Unit for Followup. During its 8 months of operation, this unit stimulated activities by other agencies and groups to achieve Conference objectives, and interwove Conference philosophy, materials, and made suggestions to the Bureau. These purposes were carried forward by preparing special publications geared to Conference topics, and by providing a full-time consultant to work with national, State, and local organizations concerned with children and youth.

The Council of National Organizations was active in planning and conducting the joint conferences and special conferences held in 1960. This council meets biennially to review and evaluate activities of the member organizations related to followup of the 1960 Confer-

ence. Individual members followed up on the Conference recommendations.

Also taking its cue from the 1960 Conference recommendations, the Interdeaprtmental Committee on Children and Youth suggested proposals, through its subcommittees, for getting rehabilitative health services to Selective Service rejectees; for helping young people in their transition from school to work; and for drawing on the potentials of youth to provide constructive services. These have been incorporated into national programs.

Since one measure of the success of any Conference is the action that flows from it, State Committees on Children and Youth were urged to keep informed of conditions throughout their States and to suggest needed changes —to their Governors and legislatures, to organizations and agencies, and to individuals with a concern for children and youth.

Immediately following the Conference, there was a surge of activity to bring the recommendations from the forums to the attention of citizens throughout the Nation. Some State Committees provided speakers and consultation to local groups to inform and interpret. Others distributed on a statewide basis the recommendations from the Conference and a report on their State's activities.

A number of statewide and regional conferences were held. Local and statewide studies were undertaken. Clearinghouses of information and materials were established. Newsletters were published. Trends and developments affecting youth and child life were identified, together with problems and needed action. Conferences were convened and reports distributed. Legislation was sponsored or recommended. Subcommittees were set up to study particular conditions.

During the years since the 1960 Conference, particular emphasis has been paid to youth participation in community affairs. Committees have encouraged young people to plan and conduct statewide youth conferences. In some instances, this effort has supported or has been devoted to the formation of youth councils, locally and on a statewide basis.

In those States where young people are not members of the State Committees, and youth councils do not exist, State Committees are trying to determine how best to develop their programs in order to give young people an opportunity to realize the potential of their engagement in community life.

When preparation for the 1970 Conference got underway, 44 Committees or groups which had been requested by their Governors to cooperate with the 1960 Conference—and, at its conclusion, to do what they could to implement Conference recommendations—were active. Their accomplishments for children and youth serve as a testimonial to the vitality of citizen concern released and reinforced by the 1960 Conference.

Many of the Committees active in the fall of 1967 had been reappointed by the Governors of their States to provide leadership in preparation for the 1970 Conference. Since the Golden Anniversary Conference, these Committees on Children and Youth had worked to bring about the community involvement which is vital to any lasting improvement in the conditions that affect children.

The 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth

The first steps toward a 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth were taken in August 1966 by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, John W. Gardner. At the request of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Secretary Gardner wrote to the Governors of

the 50 States, Puerto, Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, and to the President of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, asking for their support. In his letter, the Secretary asked each Governor to appoint a committee to plan for participation in the Conference, to act as liaison between the Governor and a national committee to be appointed by the President, and to work with the staff of the 1970 Conference. Staff for the Conference will be attached to the Children's Bureau.

Several ad hoc advisory groups, including one composed of youths, have been convened by the Chief of the Children's Bureau to discuss possible formats, themes, and issues for the Conference. The Bureau has also been working closely with representative State, national, and Federal agencies, committees, and councils that have initiated various Conference planning efforts. From the deliberations of these groups, a preliminary consensus seems to be emerging—that the tempo and tenor of the late 1960's are providing unprecedented and unusual challenges to those who are paving the way for the next Conference. As these groups move forward in their planning activities, they may find inspiration in the words of George Santayana, "We must welcome the future, remembering that soon it will be the past and we must respect the past remembering that once it was all that was humanly possible."

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